

**Just Go: A How-to-Guide for Studying Abroad**

**Georgia Googer**

**Honors Capstone Project**

**Young Harris College**

**Spring 2016**

## **Getting Started**

Studying abroad can be a life changing opportunity. By combining education and travel, your academic experience is enhanced via cultural exposure. Not only does studying abroad foster classroom engagement, but it can provide you with valuable learning moments as you navigate a new place. The Study Abroad Program at Young Harris College is here to help you achieve your study abroad goals and guide you along the way!

This how-to-guide has been created to help you begin the study abroad process. Including a planning sheet, helpful contact information, internal and external program offerings, scholarship and financial aid information, and personal accounts from YHC students who have studied abroad, the guide provides you with all the basic information you need to get started.

## Planning Sheet

A crucial component of studying abroad is understanding *why* you want this experience. Use the space below to reflect and gather your thoughts about studying abroad and plan for the steps ahead. Remember, preparing for a study abroad trip requires quite a bit of time and advanced planning, so give yourself enough time!

1. Why do you want to study abroad? How do you think studying abroad will benefit your education and your future?
2. Where do you want to go? Why?
3. What do you want to study? Why?
4. Have you explored the study abroad options available to you through Young Harris College?
5. Do you have a specific study abroad program outside of Young Harris College in mind? If so, why this particular program?
6. Have you met with your academic adviser and discussed your study abroad goals?
7. Have you met with the coordinator for study abroad at Young Harris College, Dr. Ruth Looper?
8. What sort of financial aid and/or scholarship options have you explored to fund your trip?

## Helpful Contact Information

Below is a compilation of contacts that will be helpful throughout the study abroad process. All of these individuals and departments are here to assist you and answer your questions so do not hesitate to ask!

### **Dr. Ruth Looper, Director of Study Abroad**

- Office located in the English Department suite, bottom floor of the Goolsby Center
- (706) 379-5136
- [rlooper@yhc.edu](mailto:rlooper@yhc.edu)

### **Tammy Gibson, Registrar**

- Offices located in the bottom floor of the Pruett-Barrett Building
- (706) 379-5230
- [tgibson@yhc.edu](mailto:tgibson@yhc.edu)

### **Candice Shook, Financial Aid Counselor**

- Office located in the bottom floor of the Pruett-Barrett Building
- (706) 379-5163
- [cmshook@yhc.edu](mailto:cmshook@yhc.edu)

### **Charlie Rogers, Business Office (Student Accounts)**

- Office located in the bottom floor of the Pruett-Barrett Building
- (706) 397-5223
- [progers@yhc.edu](mailto:progers@yhc.edu)

## **Study Abroad Opportunities through Young Harris**

Further information on these study abroad programs can be found on the study abroad website, [www.yhc.edu/academics/study-abroad](http://www.yhc.edu/academics/study-abroad), and you are encouraged to contact the Director of the Study Abroad Program, Dr. Ruth Looper, to express your interest in study abroad and/or ask any questions. Below is a brief overview of the study abroad offerings via YHC:

### **Faculty Led Programs:**

The faculty led programs are often available to students at the end of the spring semester but may be offered during the summer or fall. Usually extensions of classes offered at YHC, these programs are designed to foster learning through cultural experiences and are advertised throughout the school year. In the past, students and faculty have travelled to England, Ireland, Italy, France, Spain, and Vietnam. To apply for one of these trips a student must have a minimum of a 3.0 GPA. However, GPA requirements are set by the program leaders and may differ from the set 3.0.

### **Study Abroad Affiliates:**

International Students Abroad (ISA) is an organization devoted to aiding students to achieve their study abroad goals. The YHC study abroad website provides links to the main ISA website, program search tools, funding for ISA trips, and online applications. If you are interested in studying abroad outside of Young Harris, ISA is a great first stop for exploring your options as they provide an academically diverse list of programs all over the world.

### **Study Abroad Partners:**

#### **Harlaxton College:**

Harlaxton College in Grantham England provides students with the unique opportunity to live and study in a historic English manor house. Young Harris students are welcome to apply for transient student status through the University of Evansville and study at their British campus, Harlaxton. One Young Harris student a year may be awarded the Beverly Barrow Woodward, '53, Endowed Scholarship to study at Harlaxton. Further information for this scholarship is listed on the Scholarship and Funding Options page of the packet.

#### **Pompeu Fabra University (PFU):**

A prestigious university located in Barcelona Spain, PFU offers students the opportunity to enrich their learning through cultural immersion. A great program for students interested in furthering their knowledge of the Spanish language and culture, study abroad options for summer, spring, and full semester sessions are available. If interested, contact Dr. Diana Santiago, Chair of the Foreign Language Department, as well as Dr. Ruth Looper.

## **Exchange Programs**

### **Konkuk University:**

Located in Seoul, South Korea, Konkuk University offers an exchange program for a semester or full year of study. Additionally, a four week summer session is available. A liberal arts institution, Konkuk University allows for students to not only enrich their learning through a variety course offerings, but also to engage with a culture different from their own. The class sizes are small and taught in English.

### **Irish-American Scholars Program:**

Another exchange program, students may study for a semester or full year at a cooperating university in Ireland. With both the South Korea and Irish-American exchange programs, a YHC student will pay tuition to his/her home institution and will be responsible for room and board, books, travel, and other expenses associated with the study abroad program selected. If interested in studying via the Irish-American Scholars program, contact Dr. Ruth Looper.

## **External Programs**

Young Harris students are encouraged to find study abroad programs that best suit their aspirations. Therefore, the Study Abroad Program at YHC provides links and resources to external programs on its website, [www.yhc.edu/academics/study-abroad](http://www.yhc.edu/academics/study-abroad), and the Director of Study Abroad, Dr. Ruth Looper, is available to help you find programs that fit your specific goals. Listed below is an overview of some of these external programs:

### **University of Georgia Study Abroad Programs:**

The University of Georgia (UGA) allows students to apply for transient status in order to study abroad through their programs, so as a YHC student you can study via UGA and their course offerings. The UGA International Education website offers program search tools so that you can easily find programs that suit your interests. Offering a wide variety of programs, the UGA Study Abroad Program is an excellent resource.

### **StudyAbroad.com, instudy.com, and American Institute for Foreign Study:**

Similar to ISA, these three websites allow students to search for programs specific to their interests. Providing an extensive list of study abroad programs all over the world, these resources are meant to help you familiarize yourself with various program offerings. Additionally, they can put you in contact with program directors, advisors, and students who have previously studied abroad. These sites also offer information on scholarships and funding options for your study abroad trips.

### **GoAbroad.com:**

Much like ISA and other online resources, GoAbroad.com helps students find study abroad programs all over the world. However, this service goes one step further and provides information on volunteer, internship, teaching, and employment opportunities abroad. While this website can help in studying abroad, it would be helpful to anyone who has interest in travelling abroad for other purposes.

## **Scholarships and Funding Options**

Young Harris College and other study abroad resources offer scholarships to students interested in academic travel. These funding options are listed on the YHC website for study abroad, [www.yhc.edu/academics/study-abroad](http://www.yhc.edu/academics/study-abroad). You are encouraged to speak with the Director of Study Abroad, Dr. Ruth Looper, the Business Office and the Office of Financial Aid for further information.

### **The Beverly Barrow Woodward, '53, Endowed Scholarship:**

One Young Harris College student is awarded this \$5,000 scholarship every year for the purpose of studying abroad in England. The scholarship may be applied to Harlaxton College or Oxford College. In order to apply, students will fill out an application and write a personal statement. Upon review, there is a round of interviews for scholarship finalists determine the recipient.

### **ISA-Affiliated Scholarships:**

ISA awards over \$600,000 in scholarships for students to study abroad. The scholarships have various requirements and deadlines, which can all be found on the ISA website.

### **How to Find the Best Scholarships for You:**

The study abroad website for YHC outlines a number of scholarship opportunities as well as links to the application materials. While it may feel overwhelming searching through the wide variety of funding options available, it is a manageable process! Approach your scholarship search the same way you find your study abroad program. Many scholarships are specific to geographical location and area of study. So, once you have decided where and what you want study, you will be able to find scholarships that are best suited to your goals. If you are dedicated to a place and academic interest, then you will be a stronger applicant for scholarships designed for those programs!

## Student Experiences

To provide some insight to what studying abroad is like, several YHC students who participated in a variety of programs through Young Harris or other institutions were asked to share their experiences. Below is what they had to say about their travels!

### Frank Easterlin: Summer 2015



**1) Where did you study abroad and what did you study?**

Florence, Italy, Travel literature of the Grand Tour from 1700s to 1960.

**2) How did the resources available to you at Young Harris via our Study Abroad Program aid in your planning for study abroad?**

Dr. Eloise Whisenhunt told me about the program and wrote my letter of recommendation. Otherwise I pretty much did the application and financial aspect myself.

**3) When planning for your trip, what difficulties did you encounter?**

I didn't really stumble. I had a passport already and my mom went with me, so it was pretty smooth.

**4) Please briefly describe your study abroad experience and what you learned through this opportunity.**

It was definitely life changing in that it gave me a new perspective on education, time, and place. In regards to time and place, being in the city that was the heart of the Renaissance helped me find a respect for not only where I was geographically but where I was in correspondence to the history of my immediate location. In education, I found an importance that I do not think I could have found in a classroom. The process of learning everything I could about my trip and location exponentially improved how I viewed my time abroad.

**5) If you could give one piece of advice to a student interested in studying abroad, what would it be?**

Go.

## **Elli Flaig: Summer 2015**

### **1) Where did you study abroad and what did you study?**

I study in Heredia and Playa Samara, Costa Rica, and I took Spanish classes.

### **2) If you studied abroad through a program outside of YHC, please list what program it was and how you learned about this opportunity.**

I studied abroad at a school in Costa Rica called Intercultura Spanish School. I found it by googling Spanish schools in Costa Rica.

### **3) When planning for your trip, what difficulties did you encounter?**

The hardest part for me was deciding a return date. I didn't know if I wanted to travel by myself after I had finished classes or if I wanted to come straight home.

### **4) Please briefly describe your study abroad experience and what you learned through this opportunity.**

I loved my study abroad experience. It forced me out of my comfort zone. I lived with two host families who didn't speak English, so I was forced to speak Spanish. I am so much more confident in everything I do now because of everything I did in Costa Rica. I traveled across the country via bus not really knowing where I was going, but I was following directions spoken in Spanish and broken English, hoping I had understood everything they had said properly. The biggest thing I gained from studying abroad was confidence. If I could navigate a foreign country with a different language, then I can do almost anything. I think having that confidence has definitely helped me as an adult; I am not afraid to try new things or do new things. My Spanish improved so much while I was there. I went from having broken sentences to being able to have full conversations with strangers about almost anything. This experience makes me want to be fully fluent in Spanish and live in a Spanish speaking country for a few years.

- 5) **If you could give one piece of advice to a student interested in studying abroad, what would it be?**

My advice would be to do it! Because why not?



### **Georgia Googer: Summer 2015**

- 1) **Where did you study abroad and what did you study?**

I studied the Science Fiction novel and Anthropology at Harlaxton College in Grantham, England.



- 2) **How did the resources available to you at Young Harris via our Study Abroad Program aid in your planning for study abroad?**

Young Harris College made my study abroad experience possible through the Woodward Scholarship. As an English Major, studying in England has always been an academic goal of mine, so this particular resource was perfect for me.

- 3) **When planning for your trip, what difficulties did you encounter?**

When it came time to plan for my travels, I felt a bit overwhelmed by everything I had to accomplish. However, the University of Evansville helped me step by step through the process of applying to Harlaxton and what was required of me, so in the end everything was fine. Also, the Study Abroad Program here at YHC was incredibly useful when it came time to fill out paper work, find my flights, obtain a passport, etc. If you are interested in studying abroad, ask questions! The program is here to assist you.

- 4) **Please briefly describe your study abroad experience and what you learned through this opportunity.**

Studying at Harlaxton has been my favorite experience of my undergraduate education. I met interesting people, was exposed to a different culture, and discovered a love for trying new things. While at Harlaxton I was able to study while also travelling all over the UK; I went to London, Cambridge, York, and Edinburgh, specifically. Having the opportunity to experience a culture so rich in history was invaluable.

**5) If you could give one piece of advice to a student interested in studying abroad, what would it be?**

Make sure you find a program that suits you! As someone who loves to study English literature, going to the birthplace of *The Canterbury Tales*, *Hamlet*, *Paradise Lost*, and, of course, *Harry Potter* was the best thing I could have done for my education. It made my learning that much more real.

**Christa Hamill and Grace Williamson: Fall 2015**



**1) Where did you study abroad and what did you study?**

**CH:** I studied at Ulster University in Coleraine, Northern Ireland (part of the UK!). I studied history and biology there, an odd mix I know!

**GW:** I studied with Christa in Coleraine, Northern Ireland at Ulster University. I studied history, specifically Post-War Britain, American Film Culture on the Vietnam War, and 19th and 20th Century Irish Women.

**2) How did the resources available to you at Young Harris via our Study Abroad Program aid in your planning for study abroad?**

**CH:** I was able to apply through the Study Abroad Program at YHC, and would not have heard of the program if it weren't for the former Adviser, Dr. Whisenhunt. Being exposed to opportunities abroad via word of mouth or emails made an impact!

**GW:** I heard about the program through a YHC email.

**3) Please briefly describe your study abroad experience and what you learned through this opportunity.**

**CH:** I have never been out of the country prior to this program, and Ireland had always been on my bucket list. Although I have to admit that the school did not quite meet my expectations, being in another country for a semester is one experience I'm incredibly thankful for! I now have international friends, and learned quite a bit outside of the classroom! Experiencing the differences of being in another country is one worth having. I consider myself a more unique candidate for graduate school as well, which is a long-term benefit of having studied abroad. I learned a lot about my own country and the perspectives of people who don't live in it, which I found interesting. My history classes were fruitful in teaching me much about Europe and the UK, content I may not otherwise be exposed to! It also inspired me to travel as much as I can in the future, as it piqued my interest and enjoyment for traversing a new country and its culture! If I could study abroad again through YHC, I definitely would!

**GW:** This experience did help me grow in responsibility. I was not babied through this process; it was up to me to get everything done myself. It was also a growing experience to be completely independent living off on my own. So, I am definitely more confident in myself and my ability to live on my own. I am a more cultured person by learning about different people, their ideas, lives, history, etc.

**4) If you could give one piece of advice to a student interested in studying abroad, what would it be?**

**CH:** Although this is a tough question, I would have to say this: If you're debating on studying abroad and are torn, set up a financial plan for yourself and make small goals to achieve throughout your financial ventures. I NEVER believed that I would be able to study abroad, and, with the help of the YHC financial aid office, as well as setting up my own goals, I was able to do so. It's NOT impossible to raise enough funds and to take out small loans, if necessary. I have to say that travelling while in college is worth the effort it takes to financially prepare yourself, something that I learned through this process!

**GW:** Make sure to check with all the departments on campus 50 times to ensure you/they are not forgetting anything. And try your best to have a buddy go with you! It makes all the difference.